

Twenty ideas for creating a positively outrageous customer service culture in your business or organisation

**Compiled by:
Peter Kenyon
Director
Bank of I.D.E.A.S.
(Initiatives for the Development of Enterprising Action
and Strategies)**

**14 Bird Road
Kalamunda 6076**

**Phone:++ 61 - 8 62931848
email: pk @ bankofideas.com.au
website: www.bankofideas.com.au**

1. STRIVE TO BE A 'WOW' BUSINESS

Create customer excitement.

'Banish the Bland'
(Chris Daffey)

'Dare to be different'
(Barry Urquart)

2. DEVELOP AND DISPLAY A BUSINESS VISION/MISSION AND CUSTOMER COMMITMENT STATEMENTS

Post it, live it and make it visible.

VISION STATEMENT OF IPSWICH COLOUR COPY SHOP

Our vision is to help all our customers succeed by helping them reach their marketing and business goals.

This is achieved by:

"Listening to our customers needs so that we can decide how our technology can best help them..."

"Being a company that our clients can rely on for integrity and trust..."

"Ensuring that our staff have a positive and helpful attitude and are continually developing new skills..."

Mission Statement of In-N-Out Burgers

We exist to:

- 1. Providing the freshest, highest-quality food and services for a profit, and a spotless, sparkling environment wherein the customer is our most important asset.**
- 2. Providing a team-oriented atmosphere whereby goal setting and communications exist, and providing excellent training and development for all of our associates.**
- 3. Assisting all communities in our marketplace to become stronger, safer, and better places to live.**

Our Pledge

- ✧ You will always be welcomed with prompt, courteous service.**
- ✧ Our offices, work sites and visitor centers will be open at times convenient to our customers.**
- ✧ You will receive the services and information you request, or we will explain why we cannot meet the request.**
- ✧ You will be fully informed of the processes required for grants, agreements, contracts and permits, and we will respond in a timely manner.**
- ✧ You will be asked regularly to help us improve our services and business practice.**

- ✧ Our facilities will be safe, clean, attractive and informative.
- ✧ Our facilities and programs will be accessible to persons of all ages and abilities.

(United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service)

Lobby Commitment by the Fairfield Inn by Marriott

At Fairfield Inn by Marriott,
a promise made is a promise kept.

You're our guest, and guests are our highest priority at Fairfield Inn. So much so, that each of us has made you a promise, signed it and displayed it in our lobby as a reminder of your importance ... and our commitment.

We promise to:

- Always make you feel welcome
- Always give you a room that's clean, fresh and reflects the highest quality standards
- Always respond promptly to any need you might have
- Always give you the service that will make you want to return.

If, for any reason, you believe we're not keeping our word, please tell us immediately. After all, a promise is a promise.

The Staff
Fairfield Inn by Marriott

3. CHOOSE THE RIGHT STAFF

Value high energy, enthusiasm and a positive attitude.

'We have to be passionate in everything we do and say. I can't bear to be around people who are bland or bored. There's a breed of brain dead, gum chewing assistants in so many shops, I want our people to feel excitement about our culture and our product!'

(Tom O'Toole, Beechworth Bakery)

4. TRAIN, DEVELOP AND SUPPORT STAFF

For example: induction training, product/service knowledge training, customer service training, staff handbook outlining standards and procedures. Make sure staff knows what service is all about.

'I am so often questioned why I invest so much in my staff training, given some staff go and work for others. My response - "What's better? Train and they go and work for someone else. Not train, and they stay with you!"'

(Tom O'Toole, Beechworth Bakery)

5. BE AN EFFECTIVE ROLE MODEL

Lead by example in terms of attitudes, behaviours and communication.

'A man without a smiling face must not open a shop.'
(Chinese proverb)

6. HOLD REGULAR STAFF TEAM MEETINGS

Focus on what can be improved.

Seek staff ideas on how service could be improved.

7. RECOGNISE AND REWARD STAFF FOR A JOB WELL DONE

Instigate random acts of generosity for good performance.

Instigate rewards for best service and idea generation.

*'Don't tell you staff what they are doing wrong,
tell them what they are doing right. It's hard.
I'm paying them to do it right, why should I tell the buggers!
But I have got to'*

(Tom O'Toole, Beechworth Bakery)

*'There are two things people want more than sex and money recognition and
praise'*

(Mary Kay Ash)

'Catch people doing something right'
(Ken Blanchard, Author 'The One Minute Manager')

8. PERSONALISE SERVICE AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH CUSTOMERS

Work at relationships with your customers - it should not start or stop when a sale is made.

- see attached 'Tips for Giving Personalised Service'
- see 'Anita Roddick's 20 second crash course in customer service'
- see Twenty Five Service Attributes, according to First Chicago Bank

TIPS FOR GIVING PERSONALISED CUSTOMER SERVICE

- ◆ Call each customer by name (if you don't know their name, find out!)
- ◆ Find out something about each of them - their family or their personal interests etc - ask your customer about these or discuss these when you interact with them
- ◆ Make customers important - give them friendly recognition, ask for their opinion, pay them genuine compliments

- ◆ Listen to what each customer has to say with genuine interest - then respond in ways that will meet their needs, motivations and personality
 - ◆ Treat each customer as an individual
 - respond to their particular needs, motivations and personality
 - ◆ Know your customers' personal buying history, needs and motivations
 - ◆ Give each customer enough of your time to meet their needs and so that they enjoy buying from your business
 - ◆ Involve customers in your business
 - ask them for their opinions and suggestions
- (Adapted from Richard Gerson "Beyond Customer Service')

Anita Roddick's 20 second crash course in Customer Care

Never treat customers as enemies, approach them as potential friends.
 Think of customers as guests, make them laugh.
 Acknowledge their presence within 30 seconds: smile, make eye contact, say hello.
 Talk to them within the first 3 minutes.
 Offer product advice where appropriate.
SMILE.
 Always thank customers and invite them back.
TREAT CUSTOMERS AS YOU'D LIKE TO BE TREATED.

'Twenty Five Service Attributes Ranked in Order of Importance to Customers'

(according to a survey of the First Chicago Bank)

1. Being called back when promised.
2. Receiving an explanation of how a problem happened.

3. Providing me with information so I know what number(s) to call.
4. Being contacted promptly when a problem is resolved.
5. Ability to talk to someone in authority.
6. Being told how long it will take to solve a problem.
7. Being given useful alternatives if a problem can't be solved.
8. Being treated as though I am a person, not an account number.
9. Being told ways to prevent a problem in the future.
10. Being given progress reports if a problem can't be solved immediately.
11. Ability to talk to the service representative without interruption.
12. Not being put on hold without asking me.
13. Being treated with appreciation for my business.
14. Having an actual person answer my call rather than a recording.
15. Being told the service representative's name and telephone number.
16. Getting through to the customer service department on the first call.
17. Being offered suggestions on how to keep my costs of banking services down.
18. Ability to speak with someone on the first call who has the authority to solve a problem.
19. Receiving an apology when an error is made.
20. Being helped without being put on hold.
21. Having the phone answered by the third ring.
22. Being greeted with 'Hello' or 'Good morning'.
23. Ability to reach the service area after 4.00pm.
24. Being addressed by my name.
25. Ability to reach the service area before 8.30am.

9. INTRODUCE CUSTOMER RECOGNITION AND REWARD ACTIONS

Touch your customers with kind thoughtful gestures as often as possible

10. IMPLEMENT CUSTOMER FEEDBACK TECHNIQUES

- see handout - examples of 'Customer Information Gathering Techniques

'Any business that doesn't have a system for customer feedback is a solution looking for a problem'
(Scott Gross)

11. EXCEED CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

12. AVOID BEING PETTY AND MEAN

13. PRACTICE POSITIVELY OUTRAGEOUS SERVICE (POS)

Summary of Positively Outrageous Service (P.O.S)

- Random and unexpected
- Out of proportion to the circumstances
- Invites the customer to play or otherwise highly involved

- Creates compelling word of mouth
 - Creates lifetime buying decisions
- (T Scott Gross)

14. USE CUSTOMER SERVICE AUDITS

Example of Customer Service Audit Form

How well are the following aspects of customer service handled in your business?

Write your rating (using the following scale) in the spaces provided. Remember there is no point doing this audit if you don't improve the aspects that you have rated as a '1'. Feel free to modify this form to suit your business.

0	Did not or could not observe the customer service aspect
1	Requires immediate attention - below the service standards of my competitors
2	Needs improvement - equal to the service standards of my competitors
3	Exceptional customer service - exceeds the service standards of my competitors

Timeliness and Motivation

___ Customers are greeted within 30 seconds and spoken to/offered assistance within 3 minutes.

___ Incoming telephone calls are answered within three rings

Welcoming the Customer and Developing Rapport

- ___ Staff greet customers in a friendly manner and with a smile and a welcoming tone of voice
- ___ Staff make every effort to develop rapport and trust with customers
- ___ Staff use customers names

Identifying Customer Needs

- ___ Staff use questioning and listening techniques to so that they can identify the needs of customers.
- ___ Staff clarify with customers what their requirements are before recommending product alternatives and solutions to meeting their needs.

Providing Solutions to Meet Customer Needs

- ___ Staff provide solutions that are appropriate to customer needs.
- ___ Staff provide a number of alternative solutions in a tactful manner.

Communicating with Customers

- ___ Staff use eye contact and body language appropriately when communicating with customers.
- ___ Staff listen to customers and respond in polite and appropriate ways.

Problem Solving

- ___ Staff seek and deliver creative ways of solving problems for customers.

Handling Customer Complaints

- ___ Staff handle customer complaints quickly and by following our Customer Complaint and Recovery guidelines
- ___ Staff make great effort to turn a complaining customer into an advocate for my business

(adapted from Managing Customer Service Seminar Workbook, Department of State Development, Queensland)

15. IMPLEMENT A COMPLAINT AND RECOVERY POLICY AND PROCESS

Redress a customer concern immediately.
Make it easy to complain - analyse and respond to all complaints.

Use complaints as an opportunity to perform Positively Outrageous Service.

The Positively Outrageous Service Rules for Apology

- *When in doubt - apologise*
- *Apologise even when the customer doesn't know you goofed*
- *Always make amends in excess of the slip up*
- *Empower everyone to solve problems*

(according to T Scott Gross)

'Mistakes are inevitable - dissatisfied customers are not'
(Chis Daffey)

**16. KNOW WHAT YOU WANT YOUR
BUSINESS TO BE AND TELL EVERYONE**

Tell staff, customers, the media ...

17. DON'T KNOCK YOUR COMPETITORS

**18. FIND AT LEAST ONE WAY OF
SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY IN
WHICH YOU OPERATE**

19. BE A 'CAN DO' BUSINESS

Customers want to hear you say 'YES'

20. HAVE A PASSION FOR EXCELLENCE

'Passion. If your heart's not in it, get out. The sky's the limit if your heart's in it. You've got to have enthusiasm. If you haven't got enthusiasm you're bugged!'
(Tom O'Toole, Beechworth Bakery)

'If I had to nominate a driving force in my life, I'd plump for PASSION every time. My passionate belief is that business can be fun, it can be conducted with love and a powerful force for good.'
(Anita Roddick, The Body Shop)

'You educate people, especially young people, by stirring their passions, so you take every opportunity to grab the imagination of your employees, you get them to feel they are doing something important, that they are not a lone voice, that they are the most powerful and potent people on the planet'
(Anita Roddick, The Body Shop)

Finally the ESSENTIALS according to Peter Kenyon from the Bank of I.D.E.A.S.

- Smile

- Acknowledge customers within 30 seconds
(Smile, eye contact, say 'hi')

- Speak to customers within 3 minutes

- Answer the telephone before its 4th ring

- Redress a customer's concern immediately

- Keep any promises

- Use customer's names

- Seek customers feedback

- Smile

*'Find out what your customers want and give it to
them.*

*If you do it again and again, you will never have to
worry about sales or profit.'*

(Stew Leonard)